



**MICHIGAN COUNCIL
ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY**

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1000 West St. Joseph, Suite 400 • Lansing, MI 48915
(517) 482-4161 • Fax: (517) 482-0020 • www.miccd.org

**House Criminal Justice Committee
An Overview of MCCCD's Criminal and Juvenile Justice Priorities**

Submitted by Kristen Staley, Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency
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My name is Kristen Staley and I am the Associate Director at the Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency (MCCCD). Established in 1956, we are a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to improving the effectiveness of policies and systems that address the prevention and reduction of adult and youth crime.

MCCCD's work is driven by a core understanding that public safety is a fundamental component of healthy, thriving communities. But, we know that protecting the public and decreasing crime does not come cheap – Michigan simply cannot afford to invest in justice policies and programs that fail to reduce crime and recidivism, protect public safety or improve cost efficiency. Thus, we focus our research, technical assistance, and advocacy efforts towards increasing smart, collaborative, and data-driven solutions to prevent and reduce crime.

Our work is separated into two divisions: Adult Justice Advocacy and Youth Justice Advocacy.

Adult Justice Advocacy

Much of MCCCD's current criminal justice work focuses on supporting and increasing the capacity of prisoner reentry and community corrections in Michigan. This includes a dedication to sustaining the highly effective **Michigan Prisoner Reentry Initiative Model (MPRI)** and a rejuvenation of community partnerships, including former prisoners and their families. Since its inception in 2003, MCCCD has long been a partner with the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) on the MPRI model. Moreover, our Executive Director, Dennis Schrantz,

was the former Deputy Director of Planning and Community Development for the MDOC, where he oversaw the development and implementation of the MPRI.

Stated briefly, MPRI is a statewide strategic approach to provide a seamless plan of services, support, and supervision from the time a person enters prison through their return to a community. MPRI has achieved national success and lifted Michigan to achieving the largest drop in recidivism of former prisoners in the United States with an overall 18% reduction in returns to prison between 2005 and 2007. It also led to a 17% decline in prison population, closure of 21 prisons, and an annual savings of \$350 million.

MCCD's **Center for Justice Innovation (CJI)** is our newest technical assistance division under our adult justice work. Modeling our work with MPRI in Michigan, MCCD currently aids other states and local jurisdictions to reduce their prison populations through fewer admissions, decrease lengths of stay, and improve outcomes by supporting prisoner reentry services.

We also strive to collaborate across systems and bridge partnerships between stakeholders and the public, with a special focus including families, victims, and formerly incarcerated citizens in our work. A few examples of our collaborative projects and partnerships include:

- Hosting Lois DeMott, a 2014-2015 Soros Fellow, and her **Family Participation Program**. Research shows that maintaining positive relationships with family and support networks is the number one way to prevent a person from cycling back into the prison system once released. This new collaborative effort is increasing communication between the Michigan Department of Corrections and families of incarcerated persons and working towards integrating family-oriented MDOC policies;
- Co-creation of a new grass root effort, the **Michigan Collaborative to End Mass Incarceration**, a statewide network of advocates and formerly incarcerated persons dedicated to preventing the increase of Michigan's prison population.

- Working with the national project, **Towards a Caring Economy**, to document the well-being and financial barriers experienced by formerly incarcerated people, their families, and employers in Michigan and across the country.

Youth Justice Advocacy

MCCD's youth justice work centers around promoting the use of community-based services for young people and decreasing reliance on incarceration or out-of-home placement, unless absolutely necessary. We have two main projects that work on both sides of this issue: the In-Home Care Incentive, which increases front-end community-based services and Youth Behind Bars, which aims to keep young people out of the adult corrections system.

Research shows that community-based juvenile justice programs, like intensive probation, family-focused interventions, and cognitive behavioral treatment, cost less than out-of-home care, increase public safety, and improve youth and family well-being. The **In-Home Care Incentive** promotes an increase of resources towards the use and coordination of these programs across all youth-serving systems. A result of MCCD's work is the Michigan Department of Human Services (MDHS) In-Home Community Care Grant. Created in 2013, the grant is a \$1 million pilot initiative for rural counties to launch new community-based programs. The grant was renewed again in 2014.

MCCD continues to work towards increasing funding and support for these prevention and diversion programs. We provided technical assistance to grant participants and recently published the *Community Solutions Toolkit and Resource Guide* for courts, counties, service providers, and community stakeholders who are seeking effective community-based solutions to juvenile justice service delivery.

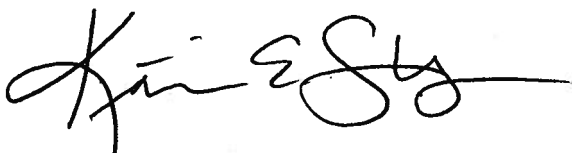
Our on-going **Youth Behind Bars** work is a product of over a year's worth of research and analysis of MDOC, SCAO and local court data and interviews with juvenile and criminal justice professionals, advocates, and families. With this work, MCCD sought to discover how a youth under 18 enters Michigan's adult criminal justice system, the impact of adult conviction on youth and families, and what policies can be changed to safely reduce the number of youth in the adult corrections system.

The findings show that Michigan's outdated approach to youth justice does little to rehabilitate children, protect public safety, or wisely invest taxpayer dollars.

- In the last ten years, over 20,000 youth were convicted as adults and placed in adult corrections. Of this population, 95% were 17 at the time of the offense, mostly for non-violent offenses.
- Youth face increased risks of violence, sexual assault and suicide while in jail or prison. Youth are routinely kept in segregation, which exacerbates serious mental health conditions.
- Youth incarceration actually increases violence. Youth exiting adult prison are more likely to reoffend and reoffend more violently than their counterparts in the juvenile justice system.
- The state has spent hundreds of millions of dollars on youth incarceration. Because an adult conviction creates barriers to employment, the costs to the state are compounded in the form of decreased tax revenues, increased reliance on public benefits, and possible return to prison.

MCCD provides ten policy recommendations with the report that would safely reduce youth incarceration, improve public safety, and save money. First and foremost, MCCD recommends raising the age of juvenile court jurisdiction to 18. This would allow 17-year olds to access age-appropriate and rehabilitative juvenile services.

Thank you for your time,



Kristen Staley, J.D.
Associate Director
Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency
kstaley@miccd.org
(517) 482-4161